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ABSTRACT

This curriculum unit was developed by a participant in the 1993 Fulbright-Hays Program "India: Continuity and Change." The unit attempts to place India in the "picture frame" of the ancient world as a part of a whole, not as a separate entity. Reading materials enable students to draw broader general conclusions based on the facts presented. The Indian culture today is tied together with the glorious ancient past through Hinduism. The eight readings include: (1) "Ethiopian/Kush: The Indian Connection"; (2) "The Glory that was Nubia" ('Smithsonian,' June 1993); (3) "Indus Valley Inhabitants"; (4) "Prehistory and the Indus Civilization"; (5) "Discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization"; (6) "India's Vedic Age"; (7) "Birth and Development of Hinduism"; and (8) "Quest for the Universal One." Activities and handouts accompany the readings. (EH)

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ED 391 742

ANCIENT INDIA: THE ASIATIC ETHIOPIANS

Independent/Curriculum Project

Respectfully Submitted,

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Fulbright-Hays Participant, 1993
India: Continuity and Change
D.C. Public Schools

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ANCIENT INDIA: THE ASIATIC ETHIOPIANS

RATIONALE:

The minds of men today are stirred with eager questionings about the orgin of civilization. The remains that archaeologists are uncovering in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Indus Valley reveal that there were significant factors in the first development of the arts and sciences, that history has failed to make clear. Scientists are busy today studying the types of those civilizations and comparing them with those of the present. Sources on the early life of man are very hard to secure. Few have been written that are authentic, because it requires special technical skill to assemble and condense such matter.

Man's curiosity has been aroused. This unit will attempt to raised young peoples' curiosity to a new height. Like the "Quest of the Holy Grail", this unit will allow them to travel back in time to an area were the missing links of the chain- of- culture have been vainly sought. Our historical adventure will examine the ancient Indus Valley civilization as a part of a larger empire. Ancient Indus Valley will be liked with ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Mesopotamia will be liked with ancient the Ancient Cushite Empire.

This unit will attempt to place India in the 'picture frame' of the ancient world as a part of a whole, not as a separate entity. The students will be able to draw broader general conclusions based on the facts presented in the reading materials provided. The Indian culture today will be tied together with her glorious ancient past through Hinduism. Down through this prehistoric vista we will remove the mysterious veil of the charming and magical India, by placing her into the ancient puzzle of time.

OBJECTIVES: After reading the handouts provided in this unit and completing the corresponding activities, the students will be able to:

1. Locate the Indus Valley, Mesopotamia and the Cushite Kingdoms on the maps;
2. Name the bodies of water around India;
3. Identify the major mountain ranges around India;
4. Name the three major geographical regions of India,and describe the chief feature of the Indian climate;
5. Compare common traits of the neolithic cultures of Kush, Mesopotamia, and Indus Valley civilizations;
6. Identify the Asiatic Ethiopians, Dravidians, Sumerians, and Egyptians peoples;
7. Describe the ancient cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa;
8. Determine how the ancient Dravidians influenced Hinduism and analyze the origin of Hinduism;
9. Demonstrate how Indian people today try to following the Hindu way of life.

STRATEGIES:

TYPE OF LESSON: This unit can be utilized with a Directive Reading Lesson, Developmental Lesson, Cooperative Learning Lesson, or as a part of an Independent Study Activity.

* This unit maybe used as part of a unit or as a separate unit. The unit will be compactible with a World History Course or an African Study course.

Suggested Vocabulary List:

Cush
Ethiopia
Mesopotamia
Indus Valley
archaeologist
megalithic
neolithic
civilization
Sanskrit
Aryans
Dravidians
Ghat

*Teachers should compile a vocabulary list based on the skill level of his/her class. Teachers are also urged to "fine-tune" the general objectives, in order to better meet the needs of his/her students.

EVALUATION:

It is advised that the teacher should devise an instrument taylor made to fit the needs of his/her students, for this particular (infusion) unit. The teacher can use his/her creativity and allow their students to venture into various research activities, based on this unit. HAVE FUN!

MATERIALS: (See Bibliography)

READING #1: ETHIOPIAN/KUSH: THE INDIAN CONNECTIONS

Taken from Dr. John Jackson's Chapter Two Ethiopia and The Origin of Civilization, Introduction of African Civilization.

"Some archaeologists believe that the civilization of Egypt is the oldest in the world, while others give that priority to western Asia or India. It has also been suggested that, since all these cultures posses certain points of similarity, all of them may have evolved from an older common civilization. This possiblity has been conceded by men of outstanding scholarship. The following opinion was expressed by an eminent Orientalist: {It would be wrong to say that the Egyptains borrowed from the Summerians or the Sumerians from the Egyptains, but it may be submitted that the literati of both peoples borrowed their theological systems from some common but exceedingly ancient source...The similarity between the two companies of gods is too close to be accidental} (From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt, p.155, by Sir E.A. Wallis Budge)

A number of scholars, both ancient and modern, have come to the conclusion that the world's first civilization was created by a people known as the Ethiopians. The name Ethiopians we owe to the ancient Greeks. When the Greeks came in contact with the dusky inhabitants of Africa and Asia, they called them the "burnt-faces". The Greek word for burnt was Ethios and the word for face was ops. So ethios plus ops became Ethiopian. The Greeks reasoned that these people developed their dark complexion because they were closer to the sun than were the fairer inhabitants of Europe. According to Homer and Herodotus, the inhabitants of the following territories were Ethiopians: a. The Sudan, b.Egypt, c.Arabia, d.Palestine, e.Western Asia, f.INDIA ,(A History of Ethiopia, Vol. pp.1-2, by Sir E.A. Wallis Budge.). The Ethiopians are currently thought of a being exclusively an African people, but the case was quite different in ancient times. Budge continues by stating the following...{It seems certain that classical historians and geographers called the whole region from India to Egypt, both countries inclusive, by the name of Ethiopia, and consequence they regarded all the dark-skinned and black peoples who inhabited it as Ethiopians. Mention is made of Eastern and Western Ethiopians, and it is probable that the Easterners were Asiatics and the Westerners Africans. In the present work which I have called "A History of Ethiopia", I have made no attempt to describe the history of that large portion of the earth's surface which the Greeks called Ethiopia, but only that comparatively small section of it which is today named, both by large numbers of Orientals and by Europeans generally, Abyssinia, and also of the country of Kush, which is now known as Nubia...The identification of Kush with Abyssinia under

the name Ethiopia made by the translators of the Ethiopic version of the Bible in the 5th, (or 6th), century, has, for many centuries been accepted by the Abyssinians. And to this day the Abyssinian, in reciting Psalm LXVIII, says 'Ethiopia shall make her hands reach unto God'. During the preparation of this work I have been driven to the conclusion that the Ethiopians whose manners and customs have been so fully decribed by Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, Pliny and others were NOT Abyssinians at all, but the natives of UPPER NUBIA and the Island of Meroe, and the Negroes and Negroid peoples who inhabited the hot, moist lands which extend from Southern Abyssinia to the Equator...The hieroglyphic inscriptions of the VI, XII and XVIII Dynasties prove that caravans travelled from Egypt to the countries round about the Blue Nile, and to regions much further to the south, but there is no mention in them of any country which can be identified with Abyssinia proper. In fact, the Egyptian inscriptions cannot be said to yield any direct information about the real Abyssinia, or its peoples, and even the Nubian and Meroitic inscriptions throw very little light upon the history of the period in which they were written. From the cuneiform inscriptions we can expect no information about Abyssinia, though both the Assyrians and the Hebrews knew of the existence of the country of Kush, and that it lay to the south of Egypt. (A History of Ethiopia, Vol. I, pp.vii and viii, by E.A. Wallis Budge).

Professor Thomas Henry Huxley thought that the Egyptians and the Dravidians of India could be traced back to a belt of dark-brown men stretching from India to Spain in ancient times. According H.G. Wells, this race of brunet-brown folk, spread even farther than India; they reached to the shores of the Pacific and they were everywhere...the beginners of what we call civilization. Wells continues by adding that this peculiar development of the Neolithic culture included many or all of the following odd practices: 1. circumcision, 2.the custom of sending the father to be bed when a child is born known as couvade, 3.the practice of massage, 4.the making of mummies, 5.Megalithic monument,example stone carving, 6.artifical deformation of the heads of the young by bandages, 7.tattooing, 8.religious association of the Sun and the serpent, and 9.the use of the symbol known as the Swastika for good luck...For thousands of years from 15,000 to 1,000 B.C., such a neolithic,(Heliothic), culture and its brownish possessors may have been oozing around the globe through the warmer regions of the world, drifting by canoes often across wide stretches of sea...It migrated slowly age by age... (The Outline of History, by H.G. Wells, pp.141-43)....

An English scholar and gentleman of the early nineteenth century wrote a ponderous two-volume work of amazing erudition, entitle Anacalypsis; and it is subtitled An Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; or and Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations and Religions. The author of this unusual book was Godfrey Higgins, who was a fellow of both the Royal Asiatic Society and the Royal Astronomical Society. The book was published

in a limited edition in London, in 1836. Fortunately for the students of present day a new edition was issued by University Books of New Hyde Park, New York, in 1965. In Volume I, Book I chapter IV, of Anacalypsis, Higgins discusses "Two Ancient Ethiopias" and he say, I shall, in the course of this work, produce a number of extraordinary facts, which will be quite sufficient to prove, that a black race, in very early times, had more influence of the affairs of the world than has been lately suspected; and I think I shall show, by some very striking circumstances yet existing, that the effects of this influence have not entirely passed away. Higgins's researches led him to the conclusion that the Asiatic Ethiopians of INDIA were the founders of the world's most ancient civilization.

Dr. H.R. Hall, of the department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, the British Museum, felt certain that the Sumerians were Dravidians migrants from India. His views, quoted below, are worthy of careful consideration:{...The Sumerian culture springs into our view ready made. We have no knowledge of the time when the Sumerians were savages; when we first meet with them in the fourth millennium B.C., they were already a civilized metal-using people, living in great and populous cities, possessing a complicated system of writing, and living under the government of firmly established civil and religious dynasties and hierarchies... The ethnic type of the Sumerians, so strongly marked in the statues and reliefs, was as different from those of the races which surrounded them as was their language from those of the Semites, Aryans or others; they were decidely Indian in type. The face-type of the average Indian of today is no doubt much the same as that of his Dravidian race-ancestor thousands of years ago..And it is to this Dravidian ethnic type of India that the ancient Sumerians bears the most resemblance, so far as we can judge from his monuments...And it is by no means improbable that the Sumerians were an Indian race which passed, certainly by land, perhaps also by the sea through Persia to thee Valley of the Two Rivers. It was in the Indian home, perhaps the Indus Valley, that we suppose for them, that their culture developed. (The Ancient History of The Near East, pp. 172-74, by H.R. Hall)

...Men of almost every shade of color can be found in modern India; but the early inhabitants of India were black. Their descendants survive in Central and Southern India today. They have Negroid features, dark skin, and wooly hair. The ancient Indians are described by Professor Lynn Thorndike as "short, black men with almost Negro noses" (Short History of Civilization, p.227). Dr. Will Durant pictures these early Hindus as " a dark-skinned, broad-nosed people whom, without knowing the origin of the word, we call

Dravidians",(Our Oriental Heritage, p.396.).

...The first great civilization of India was established by these Asiatic Ethiopians in the Indus Valley. They built large cities; the principal ones being Mohenjo Daro, Chanhu Daro, and Harappa. Their cities were well built: Mohenjo Dara was two square miles in area, with regularly laid out main and side streets, lined with attractive two-story houses. Bathrooms were common, and they were fitted out with runaway drains leading to brick sewers which were laid under streets. This culture reached its peak about 3,000 B.C. These people had domesticated cattle, sheep, and elephants; they cultivated wheat and cotton, possesed boats and wheeled carts, were skillful workers in bronze and iron. They even discovered a process for iron rustproof. There is still standing in India a pillar of stainless steel, and after three thousand years there is no sign of rust on its surface. *[You may find this pillar of iron in Dehli, India today. This solid shaft of iron, 24 feet in height, is inscribed with six lines of Sanskrit.] The megalith builders in India, states Professor W.J. Perry, made one great discovery. They found lying about on the surface in great quantities, in Hyderabad and elsewhere, iron of such a quality that is practically constituted a natural steel. In fact, it was of this iron that Danascus blades were made...The craft of iron working was, in time, carried further east, so that we find the peoples of the East Indian Archipelago, which may be called Indonesia for short, working iron, in Borneo, Celebes, and elsewhere,....." 1 (The Growth of Civilization, p.108, by W.J. Perry).

1. Jackson, John, Introduction of African Civilization. Citadel Press, New York,1970, pp.64-69.

Smithsonian

June 1993

Reading # 2:

The glory that was Nubia

A surge of interest in the ancient African empire (p. 90)

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Metropolitan Museum of Art

Leading a procession, four late Bronze Age Nubian princes bear rings and bags of gold to Egyptian ruler.

Reading #2

By David Roberts

Out of Africa: the superb artwork of ancient Nubia

The rich heritage and tradition of this venerable, long-neglected civilization beside the Nile is now celebrated in four great Western museums

A chariot-borne Nubian princess follows, in detail of facsimile of wall painting in royal tomb of Huy, Thebes.

To the ancient Greeks and Romans, Nubia was one of the foremost civilizations of the world. Because its domain lay on the edge of the unknown—south of Egypt, along the tortured cataracts of the upper Nile, where few Greek or Roman travelers had ventured—Nubia shimmered with legend. But there was no mistaking the area's might or wealth.

For centuries, exotic goods had flowed north in an inexhaustible stream from this African font: gold, frankincense, ebony, ivory, panther skins, giraffe tails and hippopotamus teeth. Brave mercenary soldiers, virtuosos of the bow and arrow, also traveled north out of the storied land. Herodotus described Nubians as the "tallest and handsomest" people in the world, adding that they reputedly lived to an age of 120, thanks to a diet of boiled meat and milk. Roman chroniclers reported that the southern empire was ruled by queens. From their own artwork, we know that the Nubian ideal of female beauty put a premium on fatness. Indeed, the sardonic Juvenal claimed that the breasts of Nubian women were bigger than their chubbiest babies. Writing in the third century A.D., a romantic biographer of Alexander the Great insisted that in Nubia there were whole temples carved from a single stone, and houses with translucent walls; the queen traveled in a mobile palace on wheels drawn by 20 elephants.

Although these accounts veered into the fabulous, Nubia was no mere phantasm of the poets, no El Dorado. Within Nubia, stretching along the Nile from present-day Aswan in Egypt to Khartoum in the Sudan, at least six distinct, supremely accomplished cultures evolved between 3800 B.C. and A.D. 600. Nubian civilizations lasted far longer than either classical Greece or Rome. Always a rival to the kingdom to its north, Nubia conquered Egypt around 730 B.C. and ruled it for the following 60 years.

Ta-Seti or Yam or Wawat

Why is it, then, that most of us today have barely heard of Nubia?

One reason is semantic. Over millennia, Nubia was known under many different names. To the early Egyptians, it was Ta-Seti or Yam or Wawat. Later it appears as Meroe. The Greeks and Romans called it Aethiopia (today's Ethiopia being Abyssinia to them). In the Bible it appears as Kush.

Another reason has to do with prejudice. Nubia has always been exceedingly remote and difficult of access. From its Christianization in the 6th century A.D. all the way down to the 19th, the kingdom vanished from the European record; only the glowing reports of the classical authors kept its memory alive. This neglect had everything to do with race—for Nubia had been an African empire, and a black African one at that. Even the Greeks perpetrated the prejudice. An early biographer of Alexander the Great records the queen of Nubia responding to an inquisitive letter from the youthful conqueror in the following words: "Do not despise us for the color of our skin. In our souls we are brighter than the whitest of your people."

The first archaeologists to document the glory that was Nubia succumbed to a kindred bias. Even as he dug the remarkable royal cemeteries of El Kurru below the Fourth Cataract, George A. Reisner, working for Harvard University and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, concluded that the rulers whose tombs he unearthed

Photographs by Enrico Ferorelli

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READING #3: INDUS VALLEY INHABITANTS

In The Beginning:

" The inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent thousands of years ago may have been Asians named Negritos, who lived in the forest or plains. Then, in about 3,500 B.C., a wave of invaders poured in. these were the Dravidians.

It was probably the Dravidians who launched a thriving civilization in the valley of the Indus River, now part of Pakistan. Their two big cities were Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Even though these communities flourished more than 4,000 years ago, they were modern in many ways. The main part of each city was laid out in a grid pattern with streets and avenues. Houses were made of kiln-fired bricks turned out in regular sizes. The houses had efficient drainage. Statues, pottery, and carvings adorned the rooms.

These Indus Valley people traded with other settlers in south and central Asia. And it was from central Asia that successors to this Indus civilization came. Theses new invaders were the Aryans, who came south between 1500 and 1200 B.C.

The Aryans were not as advance in the arts of living as the Indus Valley people were. But they had horses, axes with handles, and other equipment for making war, which the Indus people did not..."1

1. Isenburg, Irwin, The Indian Subcontinent. Scholastic,Inc., N.Y., 1986, pp.28-29.

READING #4: PREHISTORY AND THE INDUS CIVILIZATION

"...When the great cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were discovered in the 1920's the history of the Indian subcontinent attained a new dimension. The discoveries of these centers of the early Indus civilization were certainly major achievements of archaelogy. Before these centers were known, the Indo-Aryans were regarded as the creators of the first early culture of the subcontinent. The Verdic Indo-Aryans has come down to the Indian plains in the second half of the second millennium B.C. But the Indus civilization proved to be much older, reaching back into the third and fourth millennia. After ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, Indus civilization emerged as the third major civilization of mankind.

Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro show a surprising similarity although they were separated by about 350 miles. In each city the arcaelogists found an acropolis and a lower city, each fortified separately. The acropolis, situated to the west of each city and raised on an artificial mound made of bricks, contained large assembly halls and edifices which obviously constructed for religious cults. In Mohenjo-Daro there was a"Great Bath",(39 by 23 feet, with a depth of 8 feet) at the center fot he acropolis which may have been used for the ritual purposes. This bath was connected to an elaborate water supply and sewers...

But it was not only this excellent city planning which impressed the archaeologists, they also found some interesting sculptures and thousands of well carved seals made of steatite. These seals show many figures and symbols of the religious life of the people of this early culture. There are tree gods among them and there is a famous so-called 'Proto-Shiva' who is seated in the typical pose of a meditating man. He has three heads, and erect phallus, and is surrounded by animals which were also worshipped by the Hindus of a later age. These seals also show evidence of a script which has not yet been deciphered.

Both cities shared a uniform system of weights and measures based on binary numbers and the decimal system. Articles made of copper and ornaments with precious stones show that there was flourishing international trade. More evidence for this international trade was found when the seals of the Indus culture were found in Mesopotamia and other seals which could be traced to Mesopotamia were discovered in the cities on the Indus..." 1

1. Kulke, Herman and Rothermund,Dietmat, A History of India. Rupa, Inc., Calcutta, India, 1990, pp.19-20.

READING #5: DISCOVERY OF THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

"In 1921, archaeologists discovered traces of an ancient civilization in the Indus Valley. Since then, excavations have revealed that this civilization developed about the samme time as the early Egyptian and Sumerian civilizations. The Indus Valley civilization stretched for 950 miles,(1,500 Kilometers), covering an area larger than the Old Kingdom in Egypt. Each of its chief cities, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, was larger than any Sumerian city-state. Yet we know relatively little about the Indus Valley civilization.

Two factors have left us with many unanswered questions. First, scholars have so far been unable to decipher the written language of the Indus Valley people. Second, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro can only be partially excavated, because these cities lie close to rivers,and deep trenchescannot be dug without the danger of flooding. Despite these handicaps, archaeologists have uncovered some valuable information about India's first civilization.

The ruins of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro reveal that they were the products of the first city planning in history. Wide, straight streets divide residential areas into square city blocks. Archaeologists have excavated houses, granaries, public halls, and shops. Both cities had extensive sewer systems. Walled fortresses with towers provided protection.

To create such well-planned cities, the people needed a knowledge of surveying and geometry. Furthermore, only a strong central government in each city could have supervised the planning and construction.

Scholars are not sure who ruled the Indus Valley cities, but they think that a priest-king probably headed the government of each city. The rulers must have had considerable power because the governments exercised strict control. For example, they controlled construction of new buildings and established standards of weight and measures. Because of the tight control, writing, building styles, street plans, and even the size of bricks remained unchanged for nearly 1,000 years.

Like the Egyptians and Sumerians, the Indus Valley people were polytheistic. Statues amnd masks show that they worshipped a mother-goddess and a three-faced god. They revered sacred animals such as the bull and certain sacred trees.

...Evidence from the diggings shows that the Indus Valley civilization began to decline many years before it finally ended about 1500 B.C. Builders abondoned the uniform standards of earlier times, and quality of work declined. The arts showed less creativity, and trade with Mesopotamia dwindled. These signs of

decay indicated that the government had lost some of its power.

Most authorities believe that about 1500 B.C. Aryan invaders struck the final blow to the Indus Valley civilization. When the Indus Valley cities fell the people fled to other parts of India. Thus, while the civilizations of Egypt and Sumer,(Mesopotamia), affected later peoples, the Indus Valley civilization had little impact. After 1500 B.C., it was virtually forgotten until modern times.

Danger threatened from the west. The people of Harappa strengthened their defensive walls and blocked a main gateway to the city. But to no avail. When the fierce horse-riding Aryans attacked and occupied outlaying villages, thousands fled the city. With their weapons and terrifying beasts, the newcomers overpowered the few who remained... The Aryans swept into India through the passes of the Hindu Kush Mountains. These fierce nomadic herders had come originally from the region between the Black and Caspian seas north of the Caucasus Mountains...The chief enemies of the Aryans during the conquest of the northern plain were the Dravidians, who were probably survivors of the Indus Valley civilization. In time, the Dravidians retreated into southern India, where their kingdoms later rival those in the north!"1

1. Beers, Burton, World History: Patterns of Civilization. Prentice Hall,Inc. New Jersey. 1990, pp.54-56

READING #6: INDIA'S VEDIC AGE

"Records are very few for the millennium between 2000 and 1000 B.B. in India. All we know is that there were many invasions from north and west of the subcontinent. The most important were those of the Aryans, who came from central Asia and Iran perhaps about 1500 B.C.

The Aryans were generally tall, long-headed people with blonde hair and straight noses, differing sharply from the local population...Sweping down in several waves of invasion over perhaps three hundred years, they conquered the small darker-skinned natives. Gradually they settled down in the valleys of the Indus and the Ganges rivers, while bands pushed farther south as the need arose for new pasture lands for their cattle.

In central and southern India lived the Dravidians, a very dark, flat-nosed, short people who had inhabited this region from neolothic times. The Aryans... were unable to penetrate far into the central and southern plateau lands of the Dravidians, but they kept trying, and warfare was constant all through the Early Iron Age.

What we know of Indian life between 1500 B.C. and about 500 B.C. comes to us from the religious poems called the Vedas. This period in Indian history is therfore known as thge Vedic Age. Because the Vedas were transmitted orally for many generations before they were written down, sometimes it is hard to know what is a true picture of the earlier times and what reflects the period in which the texts were set down. The people came to believe the Vedas were inspired by the gods, and even the arrangement of words was supposed to carry magic power.

Over the centuries, from about 1200 to 800 B.C., four collections of the Vedas appeared. The oldest, the Rig Veda, a collection of sacred hymns for the sacrifice and instructions fore the priestly ritual, was entirely Aryan in origin. It also tells us of Aryan gods and heroes. From the Rig Veda we have a picture of warrior kings sweeping down on their unsuspecting foes and vanquishing them. The kings seemed to have performed the function of priets as well as of war leaders. They drank soma, an intoxicating brew that was offered to the gods. These gods represented the spirits of natural forces and elements, like those of other Indo-European peoples. The spirit of the Rig Veda is one of strenght and joy. The Aryans were still tribal and only gradually settled in villages, which they fortified with walls against raids. the next two Vedas are more a mixture of Aryan and native Indian ideas and traditions, while the last Veda, in which magic is very important in ritual, appears to include what are probably Dravidian concepts. The Vedas therefore reflect a mixing of social and racial elements in the Early Iron Age..."1

1. Hayes, Carlton, Ancient Civilizations: Prehistory to The Fall of Rome, Macmillan Pub. Inc., New York N.Y., 1983, pp.281-82.

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READING #7: BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF HINDUISM

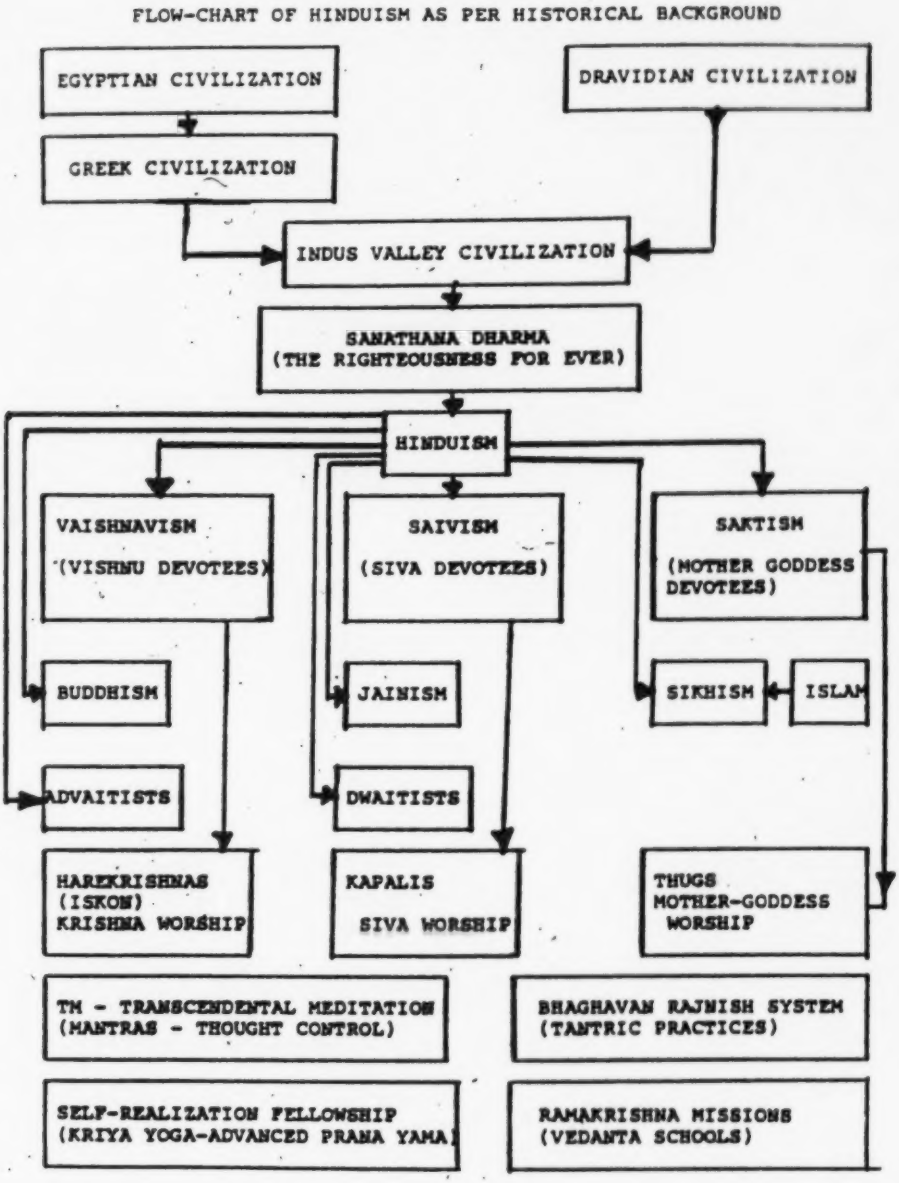
"Who is the founder of Hinduism? Nobody in particular. It is the research output of many learned men known as Rishis all of whom were Christ-like masters.

When was Hinduism born? An exact date cannot be given. Some historians trace the beginnings of Hinduism to the 3rd millennium B.C. Long before Jesus Christ, nomad tribes came to India and settled on the banks of the rivers Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra. These tribes were called Aryans. After their settlement, they started a'thinking process' which was later known as Hinduism. Some say that civilization in fact started in Egypt and the Greek learnt about Egyptian civilization from the library of Alexandria and made it there own and brought Greek Civilization to India. The early settlers of North India, mixed their knowledge with the civilization of the dark-colored people of South India, called Dravidians and started Hinduism. In a nutshell, that makes Hinduism as an amalgamation of Egyptian, Greek and Dravidian civilizations. We have several points to prove that. 1.There is only one God, but that God expresses in diferent forms is an offspring of Egyptian civilization. 2.The theory of life after death is an Egyptian idea, on which Greek worked on and finally became part and parcel of Aryan civilization. 3.The Rudra, the God of Annihilation who was worshipped by Aryans, is actually a Dravidian God. Rudra was later known as Siva in the Scriptures of Hinduism. 4.Gods like Varuna (water) and Vayu (air) have corresponding gods in Greek mythology.

Who are Dravidian? As I said before, all people in South India can be called Dravidians. But taking into account the location of all the temples of Lord Siva and development of Saivism, I should say Madras and its surroundings are the prime location of the Dravidian civilization. The best scripture in Dravidian civilization is Thirukural written in Tamil language by a saint named Thiruvallvar during 1st century B.C. Thirukural is considered to be the Holy Bible of Saivates, (people who worship Lord Siva the God of Annihilation).

How was Hinduism started? It started with Sruti. Sruti literally means 'that which is heard'. The great scientists of those days called Rishis who had perfected themselves by mediation are said to have heard in their hearts, Eternal Truths and these truths were taught to their disciples telepathically. For long periods of time there was no literature on them. The Vedas and Upanishads were in Sruti format for long periods of time. In fact the word Upanishad means Upa (near), Ni (down), Shad (sit). It means the teachings of the Upanishads are conveyed from the Guru to disciple, when the disciple sits very close to the Guru."1

Look at flow chart of Hinduism below;



Viswanathan, Ed., Daddy,Am I A Hindu, Bipin Tanna, Co., Bombay, India. 1992

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READING #8: QUEST FOR THE UNIVERSAL ONE

"... TO WHICH GOD SHALL WE DEDICATE OUR OFFERINGS?...THE MANY COULD NOT EXIST WITHOUT THE ONE"

"Thus, from India's ancient Sanskrit chants emerged the central idea of Hinduism: the concept of Brahman, the Supreme Being, the God above all gods, the source of universal life...With no founder or uniform dogma, what generally is regarded as man's oldest'living' religion started itself. Its very name Hinduism derives not from doctrine but geography- the Sanskrit word Sindu or Indus, ocean or river. Over four millenniums new cults and philosophies have enriched it, waves of reform have challenged it. Other religions have brought their witness to India and strengthened rather than weakened this tolerant, marvelously diverse faith. Today it is shared by more than 500 million people, most of them in India and nearby lands, some dwelling on Pacific islands, in Africa and inthe New World.

From the scriptures and the inspiration of later seers the Hindu learns that all creatures are in a process of spiritual evolution extending through limitless cycles of time. A man's lifetime is like a bead on a necklace whose other beads represent past and future lifetimes. Each soul, or atman, strives through successive rebirths to ascend the scale of merit until,(after a life of rectitude,self-control, non-violence, charity, reverence for all living creatures, and devotion to ritual), it wins liberation from worldly existence to achieve union with Brahman. The path toward spiritual ascent is the way of dharma; a man must live righteously according to his station in life, or caste, and he must be faithful to his inner self. Just as it is the dharma of wind and tide, water and light to maintain their inherent nature, so it is the dharma of man to be human...

According to Hindu scriptures, a normal, harmonious life consists of four stages. In youth the initiate, assuming full religious duties as he receives the 'sacred thread', begins a course of study and service in an ashram, guided by a guru, or spiritual preceptor. Next come the many years of marriage and duty to family and community. When a Hindu's spiritual growth reaches the third stag, he detaches himself from materialistic and family obligations to direct his concern to the wider humanity. In the final phase he prepares himself for the passage to the unknown reality beyond the borders of this life.

What lies beyond depends upon karma, the chain that binds action and the fruits of action. A life well lived brings rewards in the next incarnation. Being born of low degree, to suffering, poverty, and discrimination, supposedly is due to sins committed in previous lives..."1

1. Chakravarty, A. 'Quest for The Universal One', Great Religions of the World. National Geographic Society, Wash. D.C., 1978. pp34-38.

GEOGRAPHY HANDOUT *A

Three Regions of India:

" The vast Indian subcontinent has many diverse geographic features. However, the three major regions are: the northern plain, the Deccan Plateau, and the coastal plains.

Three great rivers the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra flow through the northern plain. These broad, slow rivers flow from the snow-covered Himalayas. Together with their tributaries, they supply water for farming and for transportation across the northern plain. The fertile soil of the river valleys supports extensive farming. For these reasons, the northern plain became the home of the first Indian civilization. Later, invaders set up powerful empires in the northern plains. As a result, the area has played a dominant role in Indian history.

The Deccan Plateau is the triangular-shaped heart of the subcontinent. The Vindhya Mountains separate the plateau from the northern plain. The Deccan Plateau os boardered on the west and east by long mountain ranges, the Western and Eastern Ghats. Becauseit lacks the snow-fed rivers found in the north, the Deccan Plateau suffers from droughts, which makes farming difficult.

Along the eastern and western coasts of India lie narrow coastal plains, which support both agriculture and fishing. Although India has few good natural harbors, many coastal peoples of India were seafarers who traded with peoples in other parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East." 1

1. Beers, Burton, World History: Patterns of Civilization. Prentice Hall, Inc. New Jersy. 1990 ,p.54.

QUESTIONS:

Activity # 1 Geography Study

Directions: Complete the following...

1. Locate the Indus Valley, Mesopotamia, and Ancient Kushite Kingdoms on the world map.
2. Locate the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, Indus River, and the Ganges River, on the Indus Valley map.
3. Name and describe the mountain ranges around and in India.
4. Locate Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa on the map.
5. Using the geography reading handout, describe the monsoons and how they regulate Indian life?
6. Draw a map of India showing the geographic regions of India.
7. Research the origin of the name of the Hindi Kush mountain range.

Activity #2: Ancient Civilizations

Directions: Using the reading handouts numbers 1,2,3,and 4, complete the following...

1. What is the name of the older and common ancestor of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and Indus Valley?

2. Using handouts numbers 1 and 2, list the four common names often applied to the Ethiopian people.

3. Using time line number 1, what is the oldest neolithic culture?

4. List the practices of what Thomas Huxley describes as the race of brunet-brown folks, of the neolithic.

5. Compare and contrast Godfrey Higgins and D.R. Hall's conclusions of the founders of civilization, in reading #1, with the Smithsonian's article, reading #2.

6. Draw your own conclusions on the hypothesis of India being a part of the ancient Kushite Empire. Compile a separate list of supporting documentation on the pros and cons of the hypothesis You may use outside sources to complete your lists, if necessary.

Activity #3 Indus Valley

Directions: Using readings number 2,3,4,and 5, answer the following...

1. What evidence suggest that the Indus Valley cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa were the result of careful planning?

2. How far did the Indus Valley civilization stretched?

3. What type of contact did the Indus Valley inhabitants have with ancient Mesopotamia?

4. Describe evidence of religious belief among the people of the Indus Valley.

5. When did the Indus Valley civilization begin to decline?

6. What caused the decline of the Indus Valley?

7. How did the invading Aryans find their way into the Indus Valley?

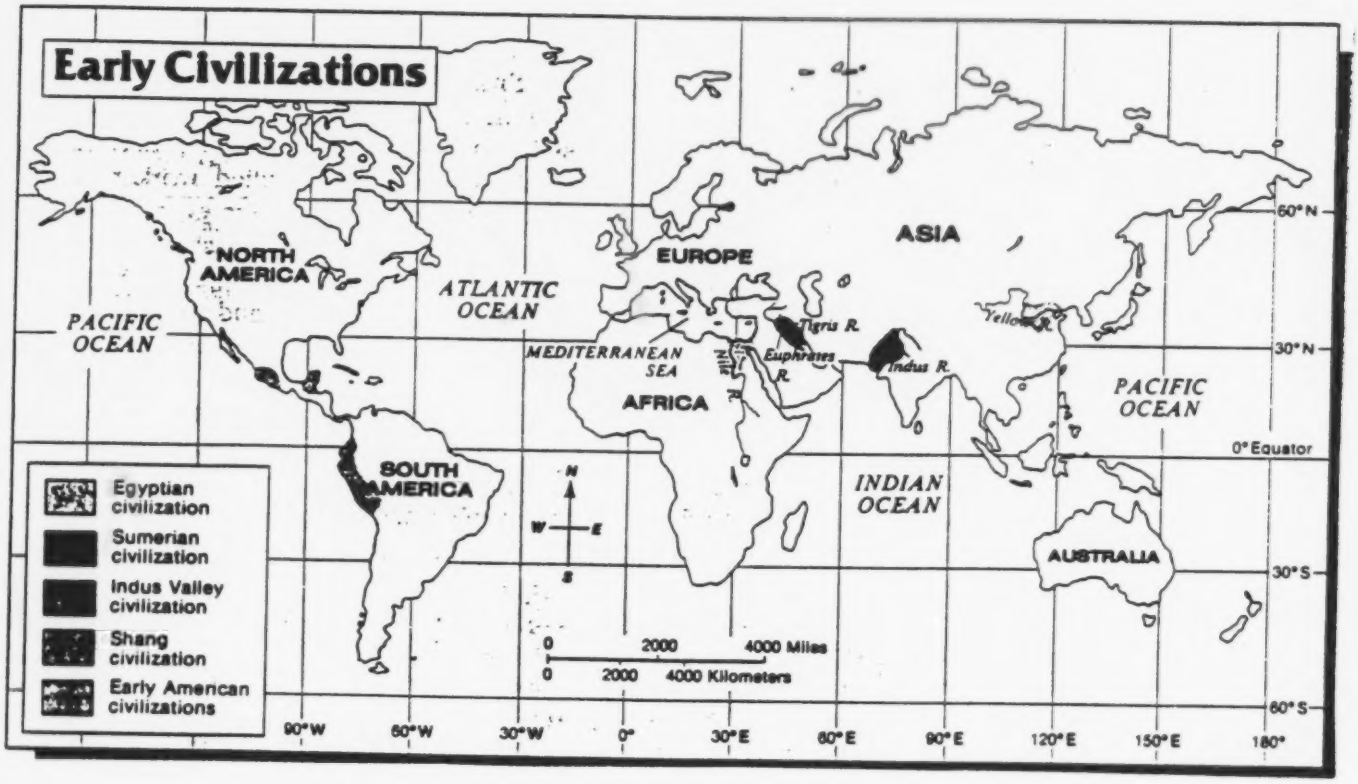
8. Why did the Indus Valley civilization have less lasting impact than did other early civilizations?

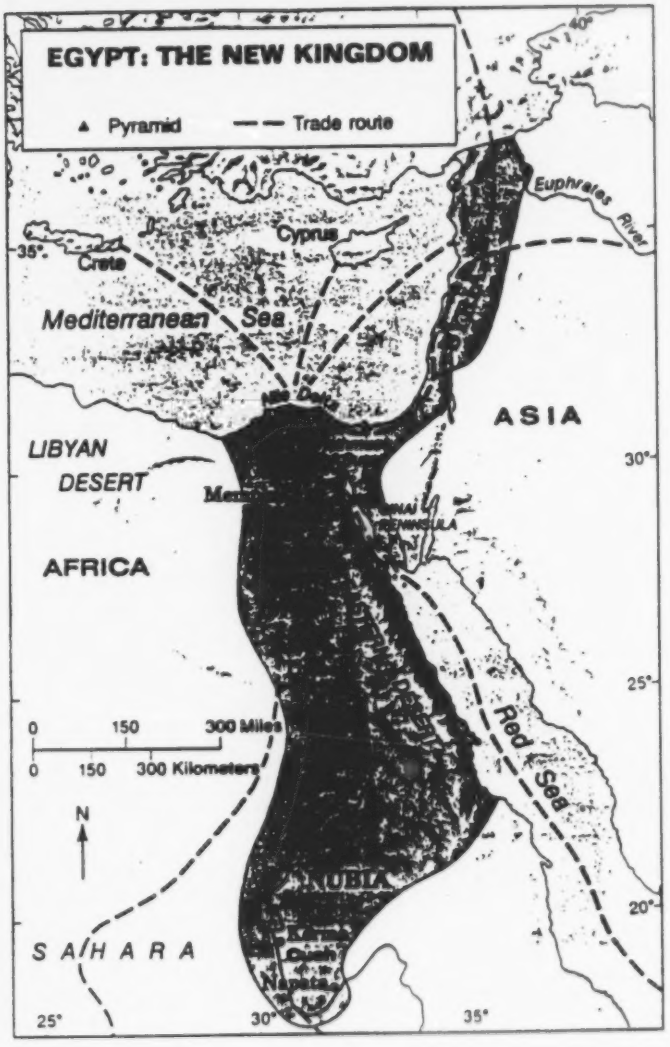
Activity #4 Hinduism

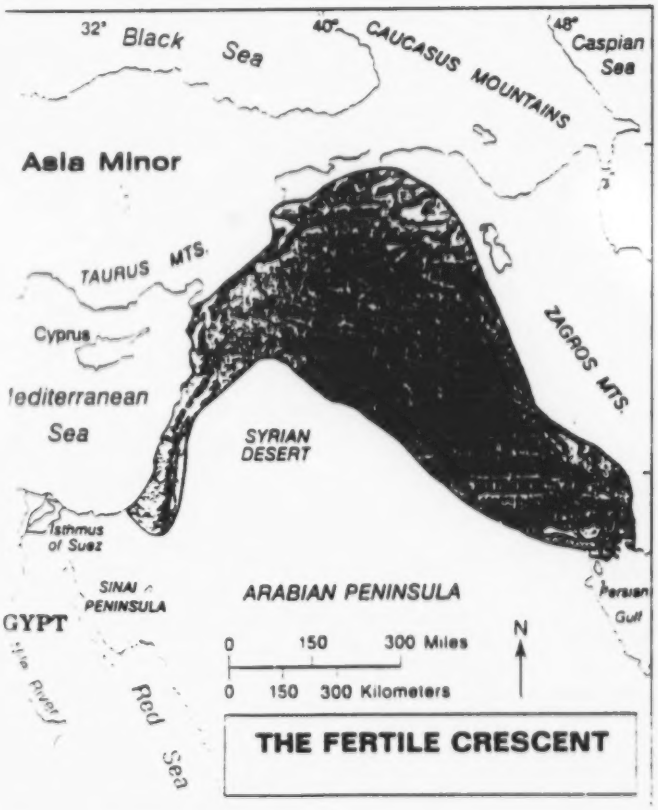
Directions: Using readings 5,6,and 7, answer the following...

1. Does Hinduism have a founder?
2. When was Hinduism born and how di it start?
3. How can Hinduism be considered as a amalgamation of Egyptian, Greek, and Dravidian civilizations?
4. Who are the Dravidians? (Use readings #6 and #7)
5. Examine the flow chart on Hinduism and write a short summary on the origin of Hinduism.
6. According to Hindu scriptures, what is considered a normal and harmonious life that most Hindi try to follow today?

M A P S AND C H A R T S


Early Civilizations
NORTH AMERICA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
EUROPE
ASIA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
AFRICA
Tigris R.
Euphrates R.
Indus R.
Yellow R.
PACIFIC OCEAN
SOUTH AMERICA
INDIAN OCEAN
AUSTRALIA
Egyptian civilization
Sumerian civilization
Indus Valley civilization
Shang civilization
Early American civilizations
N
W
E
S
0 2000 4000 Miles
0 2000 4000 Kilometers
60°N
30°N
0° Equator
30°S
60°S
90°W
60°W
30°W
0°
30°E
60°E
90°E
120°E
150°E
180°





LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC PROJECTION

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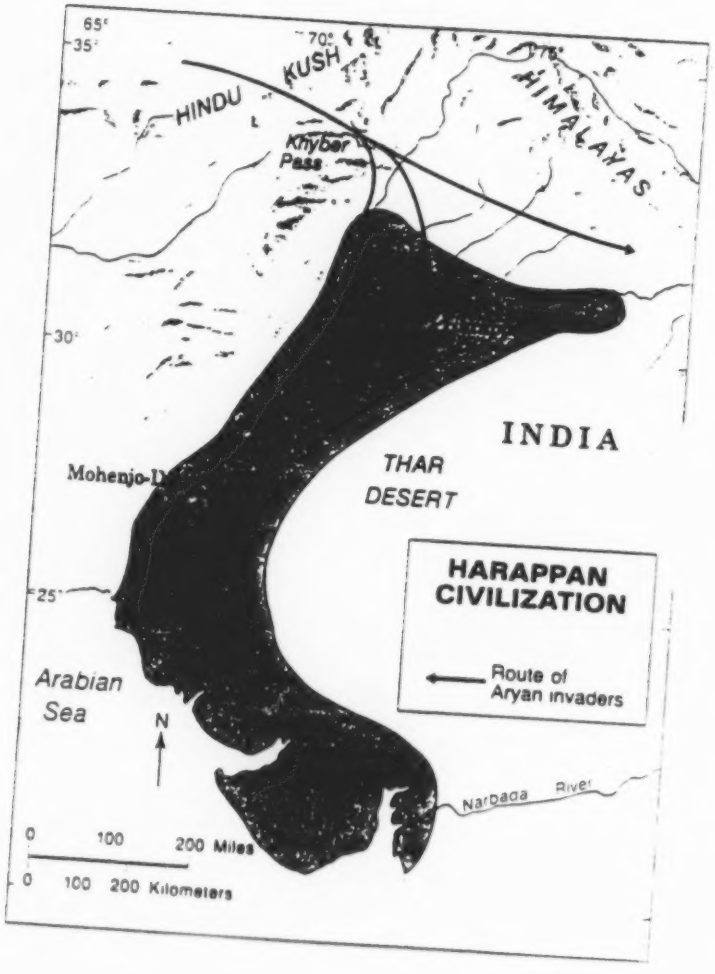
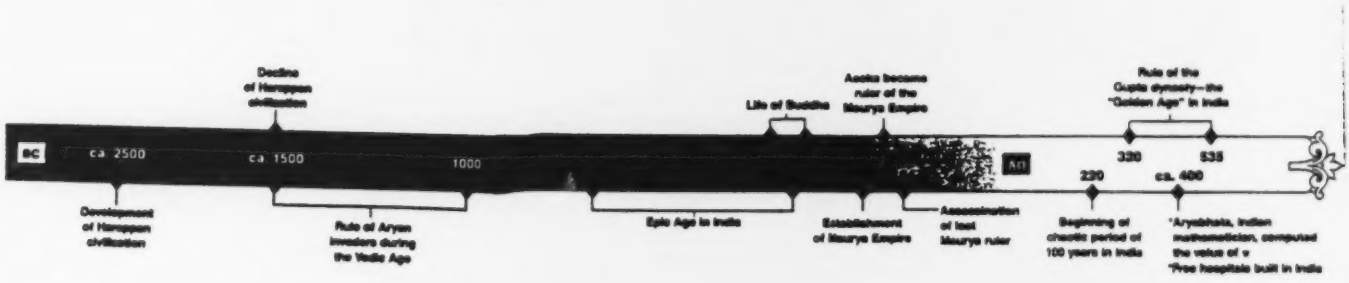
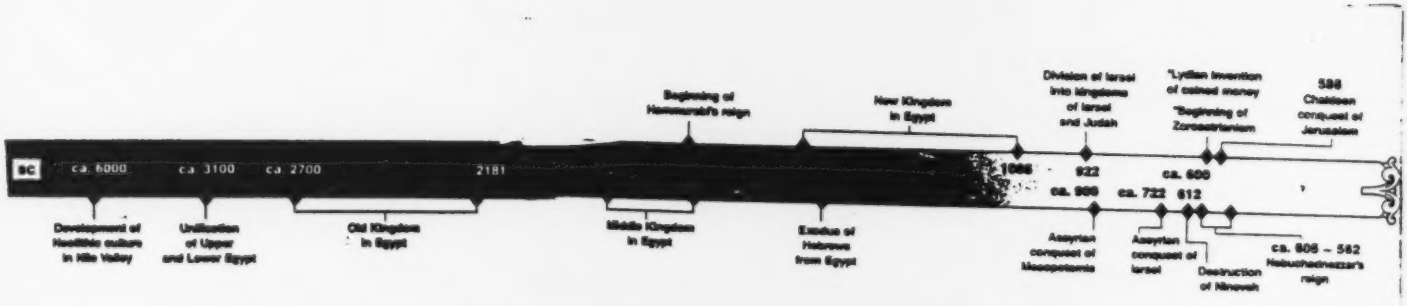

65°
35°
70°
KUSH
HINDU
Khyber Pass
HIMALAYAS
30°
INDIA
THAR DESERT
Mohenjo-D
25°
HARAPPAN CIVILIZATION
Route of Aryan invaders
Arabian Sea
N
Narbada River
0 100 200 Miles
0 100 200 Kilometers

Time Lines:

#1



#2



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